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SERMON

On the nature of Justification through the imputed
righteousness of the Redeemer.

By the Reverend ROBERT MC. DOWALL,
Minister of the Reformed Protestant
Dutch Church at Ernestown.

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S E R M O N.

JEREMIAH, XXiii. 6.

"THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

TO settle faith on the meritorious righteousness of the Redeemer, which is its *proper foundation*, and to deduce obedience from the efficacious operations of the spirit of grace, which is its *proper foundation*, are the real excellencies of the gospel ministry.—To shew, that the Son of God, through all his incarnate state, acted not for *himself*, but for *us men*; and that under the curse of an avenging law, he endured misery in all its various forms, in our stead, that we by his obedience, might be made the righteousness of God in him, is the indispensable duty of every gospel minister.—This doctrine, though branded by the self-righteous with contemptible names, is nevertheless (blessed be God) to the pious humble Soul, the source of his strongest consolation, and the very foundation of his eternal hope. For as on the two commands of love to God and our neighbour *hang all the law and the prophets*, so on the legal transfer of all the sins of the saved to the Saviour, and on the legal transfer of his meritorious obedience to them, hang all the privileges and the whole glory of the gospel Church. In discoursing this very important truth, I shall in humble dependence on assistance from the great God endeavour to shew

Firstly, What we are to understand by the righteousness spoken of in the text.

Secondly, How this righteousness becomes ours.

Thirdly, Answer objections brought against this doctrine. And

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Close the subject by making some practical observations on the whole.

In the *first place*, we are then to consider what is meant by the righteousness spoken of in the text.

THE Lord, who is here called *our* righteousness, is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Christ. He has a two fold righteousness. The one is his eternal and essential righteousness, which is common to the three Divine persons. The other is his mediatorial righteousness. And this is the righteousness, of which the Prophet speaks in the text. By Christ's mediatorial righteousness we are then to understand his holy life, or active obedience in fulfilling all the positive requirements of the divine law, in our stead, as well as his passive obedience, or suffering the penalty of the curse, which was denounced in case of disobedience.

This righteousness is, therefore, sufficiently distinguished from his eternal, essential and necessary righteousness. For we can conceive of no necessity, that the Lord of glory was under to bow the heavens, come down, take our nature on him, and suffer and die, in the stead of us criminals. All his obedience from his cradle to his grave was voluntary, Psal. xi. 7. 8. *Then said I, Lo, I come : in the volume of thy book it is written of me ; I delight to do thy will, O my God : yea, thy law is within my heart.*

This righteousness, which he performed by his obedience to the precepts, and by suffering the penalty of the divine law, being *voluntary* and so distinguished from his eternal and essential righteousness, he did not owe for himself, but subjected himself to it, that by means of his obedience, many might be made righteous, Rom. v. 19.

This brings us to the *second* thing to be considered ; namely, how this righteousness becomes ours.

THAT our forefather Adam broke the divine law, which he received from his Creator, and which enjoined perfect obedience, on pain of endless misery ; and that we his posterity are involved in his guilt, are truths so clearly taught in the volume of inspiration, that none, but such as are disposed to equivocate will presume to deny. All have,

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have, therefore, forfeited their title to happiness, and have merited eternal torment. Man has ruined himself. Now should he be restored without suffering the punishment *due* to his crime, and *threatened* by the law-giver in case of disobedience, what will become of the truth and justice of the JUDGE? or how shall the honor of his righteous law be maintained? Should these consequences take place, sinners would be emboldened to multiply their transgressions, and tempted to think, that God of truth and holiness was altogether such an one as themselves. Pf. L.

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Now shall man be miserable forever? or shall a remedy be provided in order to prevent these consequences? —None but his Maker, from whose authority he had deeply revolted, could restore him. Therefore to maintain inviolate the everlasting dignity of the divine government, and to restore man to the favor of the Most High; the Son of God assumed the human nature into a personal union with the divine, took on himself the obligations, which *his people* owed to the broken law, and became answerable for all their guilt. In this capacity he perfectly fulfilled the precepts of the law, and submitted to the threatened sentence of death; and by the expiation of their Sin, has established for them an irrevocable title to bliss, and glory. Thus he has purchased for them a *great salvation* to the unspeakable glory of all the divine perfections. The demands of the law are satisfied, and the richest grace exercised to the honor of strict justice.

To shew more effectually how Christ's righteousness becomes ours; the Scriptures actually declare, that his people were chosen *in* him BEFORE the foundation of the world, ¶ and that he is their head, and they are his body, by a mystical union §. By virtue of this union, their Sins were transferred to him, that he might sustain the punishment *due* for them, and that by his Stripes, they might be healed. In like manner the obedience of Christ

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at their head, is placed to the account of the Saved as his body, and he imputes it to them, and considers it as their own. They may, therefore, rely upon it wholly for pardon and acceptance before God.

THE types and figures, which were ordained to be used under the law, may serve to give us a true and proper idea of redemption, imputation, &c. In Gen. xxii. 13. the victim is by divine appointment directly put in the place of Isaac, and slain in his stead. No words can more clearly prove a translocation, or imputation of iniquity, than the history of the two goats in Levit. xvi. The high priest, on the solemn day of atonement, killed one, to shew thereby, that they all deserved to die, and that Christ the antetype should in the appointed time die for them. The high priest was also to put all the iniquities of Israel on the scape-goat, which was to bear them, and carry them away into the land of forgetfulness. This was the imputation not of any thing done by the devoted animal, but it was the imputation of all the transgressions of the house of Israel to the scape-goat. Man's sin was imputed to the goat. And the effects, which followed plainly pointed out a translocation of guilt. For the congregation was *so cleansed*, that their iniquities were carried away, and to be found no more; but the goat was *so defiled*, that it communicated pollution to him, who conducted it into a land uninhabited. Now unless this be a typical reference to Christ, its institution would have been altogether unworthy of God, and altogether insufficient to answer the purpose, for which it was designed.

WHOEVER is intimately acquainted with the book of God, must know, that the doctrine of imputation was familiar to the apostles, and appeared rational to them. For the illustration of this, I shall produce a well known fact, which will cast much light on the doctrine of imputed righteousness. Onesimus, a slave to Philemon, stole and carried off some of his master's property. He providentially met with Paul, and was captivated by the victorious grace of God. Paul, having understood his dishonest conduct,

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duct, undertook to bring about a reconciliation with his
offended master; and in behalf of the poor criminal writes
thus, *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that
to mine account, greek "impute it to me." I Paul have
written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.* That is
impute his whole guilt to me, I will be answerable for it as
much as if I myself had contracted it. This gives us a just
idea of proper legal imputation. For here is a plain impu-
tation of that to another, which was not his own before.

I would infer from this, that what Paul offered, the
Lord performed.—We revolted from God, and merited
eternal woe. But the compassionate Jesus undertook to
make reconciliation. That nothing might hinder the suc-
cess of his mediation, he placed himself in our stead. The
obedience, which *we* owed, *he* performed. The pun-
ishment which *we* deserved, *he* endured, as our surety
in the divine law. And as when a bonds-man pays a debt
for an original debtor, he does it for him, and in his stead,
and the payment is accepted as if the original debtor had
in his own person paid it and cancelled his obligation; so
these things being performed for us, by our divine surety,
are accepted for us, and imputed to us, as the foundation
of our pardon, and the procuring cause of our being ac-
cepted as righteous in his sight.

Thus you see the doctrine of guilt being translated
from one to another is uniformly taught throughout the
whole book of God.

All the violations of the divine law must be translated
from the *saved*, and imputed to *Christ*, and he must bear
them, and sustain the punishment due on account of
them, in order to become the Lord our righteousness. Ac-
cordingly Isaiah informs us, in his liii. Chap. that God
laid on him the iniquities of all the SHEEP, that God
astray, Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sor-
rows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and
afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was
bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was
upon him; and with his stripes, we are healed. And he is
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remarkably particular in explaining and confirming this important scheme of doctrine. *All we like SHEEP have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* And lest any should mistake the extent of this imputation, he expressly adds, *for the transgressions of MY people was he stricken.* And our Divine Master saith, *I lay down my life for the SHEEP.* § The apostle Peter vindicates the imputation of their sin to him, in these very forcible words, *who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.* † To this St. Paul adds his indubitable testimony. *He hath made him to be sin for us* ‡ and a curse for us §. If these Scriptures do not plainly mean, that God laid our sin on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he took them on himself, and consequently from us, no words, no language, can.

That there was a real imputation of man's sin to the Saviour appears from the nature of the covenant of Grace. For it is a *remediable* covenant, which was made between the Father and the Son, Zech. vi. 13.

To illustrate my argument and to obviate objections I will quote a paragraph from a late excellent writer, of the Church of England. "It is frequently affirmed, that Christ expiated the sins of the whole world. This is saying no more than the Scripture has repeatedly said. The point of enquiry is, what does that phrase the *whole world* import? Surely, not every person, without exception, who did, does, or shall exist; for in that sense, it seems impossible that Christ should die for all. Some, for instance, in our Lord's time at least, were guilty of that sin which himself has pronounced absolutely unpardonable; and would he die for the pardon of those, whose sin, he avers, shall never be pardoned? This would be like a man's paying down an inestimable price for such as, he knows at the very time of paying it, neither will nor can be set at liberty. Besides, what shall we say of those many final impenitents, whose departed souls had been in the place of torment, ages and ages before Christ was crucified at all? Full four thousand years had elapsed, from the creation, before the Messiah was even manifested in the flesh. And the Scripture will not permit us to believe, that the whole of mankind, who died within that extensive period, were glorified in heaven. Now it would both impeach the wisdom, and affront the dignity of Christ, as well as infinitely deprecate the value of his sacrifice, to suppose, that he could possibly shed his blood on the cross, for those very Souls, which were, at that very time, suffering for their own sins in hell. The tenor, therefore, of a redemption absolutely universal, will not stand the test either of Scripture, reason, or the analogy of faith. Shall we, for example, affirm, that Christ died for the salvation of Judas? The fact seems impossible. It is plain that Judas slew himself, subsequently to the apprehension, but antecedently to the actual crucifixion of Christ. The soul of Judas, therefore, went to its own place of punishment, before Christ had offered himself in sacrifice to God. And I cannot for my own part, see, with what propriety Christ could die to save a person from going to hell, who was actually there already." *Agulha Topiary*, page 86. 87.

§ Joh. 10. 15. † 1. Pet. 2. 24. ‡ 1. Cor. 5. 21. § Gal. 3. 13.

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And the earnest of peace shall be between them both,
and therefore his blood is called, *the blood of the covenant.*
Heb. x. 29. Now the condition of the covenant, which
Adam broke, must be the condition of any covenant made
for the recovery of fallen man. For it was the rule of that
moral relation, which exists between God as sovereign
Lord, and man as his rational dependent creature, and
must, therefore, remain forever unalterable: Because
man's rebellion could never dissolve his obligation to du-
ty. And as God is not man, that he should lie; neither
Son of man, that he should repent, Num. xxiii. 19. So
his immutable truth, and inviolable faithfulness bind him
to execute the penalty of the curse, either on the guilty
criminal, or on his substitute, Gen. ii. 17. For the com-
plete obedience, and holy qualities of nature, required
by this law, can never be relaxed. The volume of inspira-
tion, therefore declares, that Christ as our substitute has
fulfilled the righteousness of this law. *For what the law*
could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God send-
ing his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin
condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law
might be fulfilled in us, Rom. viii. 3. 4. Christ came not
to destroy the law but to fulfil it. Every jot and tittle of
the law must be fulfilled.

That Christ might effectually fulfil the law, for, and
instead of his people, it was not merely the obligation to
punishment, which arose from sin, but it was the *sins*
themselves, that were laid on Christ, Isai. liii. 6. 11. 12.
1 Joh. iii. 4. Their violations of the law, which is the
foundation of God's displeasure, were removed from the
Redeemed and laid on their surety, to be atoned by the
blood of the cross, Dan. ix. 24. 1 Pet. ii. 24. He had as
divine surety* to take on him the payment of that whole
debt of his chosen, which secures them from eternal woe,
and intitles them to immortal bliss, Rev. v. 9. Matt. xx.
28. Rom. v. 15. 21. Dan. ix. 24.

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* Heb. 7. 25.

To establish this point *clear* beyond misapprehension, we may consider sin as a *debt*, Matt. vi. 12. in order to a discharge from which, proper payment must be made to the law; and satisfaction given to the justice of the Judge: Accordingly our surety has given himself a *price*, an *infinitely precious price*, a *ransoming price*, to pay our debt, Matt. xx. 28. 1 Pet. i. 18. 19.—We may also consider sin as a *real enmity* against God, Rom. viii. 7: for which *proper satisfaction*, must make reconciliation for us. Consequently our surety in the divine law, takes away this enmity by the *reconciling sacrifice* of himself, Col. i. 20. 21. 2 Cor. v. 19. 21.—Sin may be further considered as a *crime*, which makes us guilty before God our Judge, and for which, a full satisfaction must be given to the law, in order to expiate our guilt. That the Son of God might effectually accomplish this; he as our surety, placed himself in our stead, took on him our sin, and by offering up himself a sacrifice to divine justice, has borne a *satisfactory and meritorious* punishment for our guilt, Gal. iii. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Dan. ix. 24. Thus he has taken on him, and by his blood has removed our violations of the divine law, which is the foundation of God's displeasure.

What can be clearer from scripture, than that our sins were the meritorious cause of his sufferings? And if so, then our guilt must have been charged on him, and punished in him. *For he has delivered us from the curse of the law*, how? *by being made a curse for us*. Do not these words plainly imply a translation of punishment? Not *we*, who were guilty, but he, who was innocent, suffered the penalty, which the law denounced on us, in consequence of disobedience. The law denounceth, *Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*. To this curse Christ, as our substitute, submitted. He endured that very curse, which we deserved. And if this be not suffering in our stead, nothing can be called by that name.

That Christ fulfilled the condition, and suffered the penalty

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penalty of the covenant made with Adam, appears from the *nature* of the law, and the *justice* of the Judge. He cannot set aside his justice, which is eternal, unchangeable, and infinite. He cannot set aside a law, which is holy, just, and good. Paul, who knew much of his master's will, plainly shews us, that God does not exercise pardoning mercy, by laying aside the demands of law, and justice; but that he hath set forth the blessed Jesus *to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*, for this express purpose, *to declare his righteousness*, even that vindictive justice, whose office is to punish transgressors, *to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness*; that he might be just, strictly and inviolably just, even when he justifies the ungodly, which believe in Jesus, Rom. iii. 25. 26. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, Rom. x. 4. From this, we see, that the *remediable covenant* was to Christ a covenant of *works*, but to believers of *grace*, of *pure grace*; and therefore, it is called a *testament*, because Christ as testator bequeaths to his legatees, all covenant blessings, *freely* without money and without price. Because, speaking after the manner of men, *though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto*, Gal. iii. 15.

The first covenant rendered is absolutely necessary, in order to the recovery of fallen man, that the sword of justice should be sheathed in the innocent bleeding Son of God. God had solemnly declared, that in the day, man sinned, he should die. The truth and justice of God stood engaged to execute the awful threatening. And none could avert the sword of justice, but by taking the curse of the broken law upon himself. Our obligation to punishment, could not therefore be cancelled, nor fallen man received into favour, without a *true and proper* satisfaction made to the law and justice of the Lawgiver. *For without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.*

That the truth and justice of the Judge might be preserved inviolate, there was a real infliction of punishment on the intervening surety. This alone can clear up the great

evangelical mystery, *JUST, yet the JUSTIFIER of the ungodly.*

Shame, death, and divine wrath were the principal ingredients of the curse. These even the curse of the broken covenant, did Jesus as our substitute undergo. Was ever *Shame* like unto that, which he bore? The prince of the kings of the earth born in the abject inclosure of a stable. Banished in his infancy from his native home, and driven an exile into foreign land. Loaded, in his public life, with the most scandalous crimes, and branded with the blackest names; apprehended as a traitor, and condemned to the cross as the vilest of malefactors,—a robber, a murderer is preferred to him! His executioners pour contempt on all his mediatorial offices. And to expose him to the utmost shame, he is fixed to the accursed tree, defiled with spitting, disguised with wounds, and exposed to the gazing eyes, and reproachful scoffs of numberless spectators.

Follow the Saviour to Gathsemane, there you will see him sustain the *wrath* of God. No remorse could alarm his spotless conscience; yet there, even there, fear and trembling came upon him. No external violence was offered to his sacred body, yet a dreadful perplexity overwhelmed him. It was cold night, and amidst the fall of chilling dew, when our divine Master lay prostrate on the earth, sweating, sweating blood, sweating great drops of blood, running down in streams to the ground. All this is but little to be wondered at. For it was then he suffered the inexpressible anguish, pains, and terrors of hell. And so insupportable were the agonies of his Soul, that he was constrained to cry out, *My Soul is sorrowful, exceeding sorrowful, sorrowful even unto death.* What cause equal to this amazing anguish, can be assigned, but the inexpressible wrath of his Almighty Father, who treating him no longer as the Son of his love, becomes his inexorable JUDGE, and sheathes the sword of divine vengeance in him as the SURETY for the unnumbered millions of the *election of grace.*

We saw it was unavoidably necessary to procure the redemption

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redemption of the Lord's people, that their surety should bear all that divine wrath, which was due on account of their sin. All the sins of the saved in all places and in all ages of the world, were charged on Christ as their surety. And could the infinitely holy and righteous God behold such a deluge of iniquity, that abominable thing, which he hateth, without manifesting his fore displeasure? Or how could the surety make full satisfaction for it by punishment, without a painful sense of the inconceivable wrath, which it deserved?

Spiritual death consists in the absence of God's comfortable presence, and in sensations of divine wrath. This will make it easy to account for the prodigious consternation of the Son of God. His God had forsaken him, and he was now to tread the wine-press of his Father's wrath alone. This was the time, when no created arm was strong enough to give the blow, it therefore pleased the Lord to bruise him, the Most High God bent his bow like an enemy, and stood like an adversary. The prophet's description of the anguish of his Soul is therefore not to be wondered at. *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger,* Lam. i. 12. It was this inexpressible anguish, which wrung from his breaking heart, that lamentable exclamation, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

HERE are the ingredients of the curse of the broken covenant, which the Son of God endured, *shame of the cross, pains of death, suspension of the divine presence,* which is spiritual death, and terrible sensations of *divine wrath.* All these, even the whole punishment due to the sins of his people, did the Son of God endure.

ALL the wrath due to every sinner redeemed FROM AMONG men, which, had it been executed on the offenders, would have continued them in everlasting misery, was contracted into one inconceivable dreadful blaze, and at once, poured out upon their interposing SURETY.

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THE utmost suffering, which the most exalted creature could endure, is nothing, when compared to the demerit of the sin of God's elect. Their sins are beyond calculation Psal. xl. 12. The substance of the law is, *to love God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind, and our neighbour as ourselves*, which makes the thought of *foolishness sin*, Prov. xxiv. 9. for it divides the mind so that it cannot be wholly employed in love to God. The sin of their nature is a continued provocation, which produces new guilt every moment; and by its influence over the faculties produces a stream of actual transgression. The burden of wrath due on account of all the sins of the elect, was great beyond imagination. But it was the *great God even our Saviour Jesus Christ*, who gave himself a ransom for us, and purchased his Church with the price of his own blood. His sufferings have therefore an all-sufficiency of merit and efficacy; and though temporary, yet with respect to his infinite nature, they are more than equal to an eternity of ours.

ALL these he endured for us, and on our account, and therefore they are reckoned to our account, and imputed to us.

CHRIST's active obedience, in fulfilling the commands of the law, are also imputed to us. For he was under no necessity of meriting eternal happiness for himself, by any obedience he could possibly perform to the legal covenant. For his human nature had all possible happiness secured to it, by means of its union with the person of the Son of God. And the subjecting of himself to obey the precepts of the law arose wholly from his covenant-engagement for us, and being performed on our account; may, and ought in justice, to be imputed to us. Because it was on our account, that he performed that obedience, and therefore it ought to be reckoned to our account.

Now Christ's whole obedience to the commands of the law, and his suffering the penalty of the curse, for us, and on our account, is what I call Christ's righteousness, which is imputed to us.

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Here is a perfect, an all-sufficient righteousness, which is answerable to all the demands of the divine law, and which is unto, and upon all them that believe. You will, however, observe, that I am not speaking of *inherent* righteousness, which is called *sanctification*, and is a *personal* qualification, but of a *justifying* righteousness, which is to be found only in the Lord Jesus, *Isai. xiv. 24. 25, surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness, and strength.—In the Lord shall all the house of Israel be justified.* And therefore the Colossians are said to be complete in him, who is the head of all *principality and power*, *Col. ii. 10.* This justifying righteousness is not in the *Israelite*, or true believer, but in the LORD. And the Colossians were complete, not in *themselves*, but in the *Christ*.

Our justifying righteousness is, therefore, the righteousness of God in Christ, and becomes ours not by *infusion*, but by *imputation*, Christ alone performed it, but he performed it in our stead, and on our account. And though he alone possesses it, yet he possesses it as our covenant-head. God therefore imputes it to us; and accepts us on account of it more freely than if we had performed it in our own persons.

THE LORD is therefore our *RIGHTEOUSNESS* by the imputation of his mediatorial righteousness to us. And the *Church of God*, which he hath purchased with his own blood, is therefore called by the same name, *Jer. xxxiii. 16. This is the name whereby she (the Church) shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* Now no satisfactory reason can be assigned, for the Church being called by that incommunicable name Jehovah, but Jehovah's righteousness being actually imputed to her.

We are therefore said to be *justified by his blood*, *Rom. v. 9.* and by *his obedience made righteous*, verse 19. *By the obedience of ONE shall many be made righteous.* Not by their own obedience, however exalted, but by the obedience of another shall they be made righteous. In the Lord have we righteousness and strength. For the LORD is our righteousness.

Thirdly,

Here

Thirdly, I proceed to remove objections, which are brought against the doctrine of our Lord's righteousness imputed.

O ye advocates for armenianism; for what did the immaculate Jesus suffer, bleed and die?—only to put man into a saveable state? Will ye thus impoverish the *exceeding riches of his grace*, by comparing the all-wise God to a foolish workman, who builds a ship, launches her into the deep, and says, “Now you may sail, upon condition you provide yourself with a helm, and steerman.” Was it through a defect of wisdom, that he laid his plan of redemption so exceedingly ill? or was he so deficient in power, as to be unable to execute it in opposition to the perverse inclinations of men, insomuch that many of those for whose salvation he intentionally died, are so much wiser, or more powerful than himself, that he cannot make them *willing in the day of his power*; nor keep them *by the power of God through faith unto salvation*? or is it through a defect of goodness, that he is not willing to exert power sufficient to subdue their perverse dispositions?—Such a scheme represents the great God as sporting with the death of his Son and insulting the misery and weakness of men, by suspending the whole efficacy of redemption on an impossible condition.

BUT blessed be God, this is not the import of Christ's mediatorial work. Having an absolute power over his own life, he became a *substitute* for the guilty, and *shed his blood for the remission of their sins*. The vengeance, which would otherwise have been executed on *them*, fell on *him*. For he *suffered the just for the unjust*, that by making a full and perfect satisfaction for all our guilt, *he might bring us to God*. And they who can torture the genuine sense of words at such an extraordinary rate as to make *remission of sins*, a *satisfactory* substitution, and *bringing to God*, to signify nothing more than putting men in a *saveable state*, can turn the clearest expression into any meaning whatever.

BUT should any of my readers object, “that if we be temperate,

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temperate, and to the utmost of our power keep the commands, that this will be a *sufficient* foundation for acceptance with God."—I answer and a *poor* foundation, seen with all its sufficiency. For although it be a principle of justice founded on the nature of things, that the debtor be discharged, when he has paid the utmost mite of his debt; yet if on the contrary, instead of discharging the debt, he be daily increasing it, can he then on the principles of reason, or justice, expect a legal discharge.—Surely not. Now God's law demands that we love him with the utmost exertion of all the faculties of both soul and body, and our neighbour as ourselves, without any reserve, or permission. But you must do more than all this in order to purchase the pardon of past transgressions; otherwise instead of claiming a reward, you will stand in need of *free pardon*. This shews the propriety of the figure. But very expressive language of Isaiah. *The Lord is shorter, than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering shorter; than that a man can wrap himself in it.* For the least transgression renders your duties utterly defective, and therefore absolutely insufficient for your justification.

Objection, "But if we repent, and ask forgiveness, that will intitle us to acceptance."—Astonishing! poor, guilty creature, talk of intitling yourself to divine favour! It is of God's wonderful patience, and forbearance, that you were not long ago wrapt in the flames of hell.

BUT you mistake the very nature of true repentance. It is the gift of God: Jesus is exalted to give repentance, Acts v. 31. This gift makes men hate sin, loath and abhor themselves as sinners, renounce all dependance on themselves, or on any thing they can possibly do, as utterly insufficient to recommend them to acceptance with God; and constrains them like the returning prodigal to confess themselves to be unworthy, utterly unworthy of acceptance, and like the penitent publican, who from a heart-felt sense of inbred corruption, cried mightily to God,

God, for mercy, free mercy, unmerited undeserved mercy. Any repentance short of this is to be repented of.

Obj. "But allowing our best works to be defective, since Joshua commanded the Israelites to *fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity*, will he not accept *sincerity* instead of that *strict perfection* required by the law?"—I answer, sincerity is very desirable. But God solemnly declares, *Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, doest thou go to possess their land*, Deut. ix. 5. Now if the earthly Canaan was not given as the reward of outward obedience, or of inward sincerity, how unreasonable to suppose, that the heavenly should be given for either, or for both. God therefore spake by the prophet, *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my Judgements, and do them.—Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you, be ashamed and confounded for your own ways*, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. 26. 27. 32. This shows plainly, that God bestows his favours, not for any *worthiness* in the creature, but for his *own sake*.

PAUL gives a true account of sincerity in Phil. i. 10. 11. *That ye may be sincere,—being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God.* He gives three properties of acceptable sincerity. 1. It must produce the fruits of righteousness so abundantly, that we may be filled with them. 2. Sincerity must derive its strength, and its fruits their pleasantness, and both their very existence, from the all-supporting, and all-supplying root Jesus Christ. 3. And instead of terminating in self justification, they tend to the praise and glory of the *giver*. For it is not said these shall *justify* you, but these shall *glorify* God. For the ability to perform all these

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these flows from the invincible grace of God in Christ, and therefore teach the necessity of an entire dependance on the Redeemer.

Obj. "our good works are recommended by Christ, and have their efficacy for justification only through his merits; so that we still depend on the Redeemer and pay him the highest honor."—What! You depend on the Redeemer! No, you depend on your own performances. *These*, these are your principal recommendation. You pay the Redeemer the highest honor!! No; you are not willing to give him the undivided honor. You diminish *his* to exalt *your own*. You talk of Christ's merits: you despise them. It is *your own*, not *Christ's* merits, that you depend on. Far be it from me to deal in the thunderbolts of eternal vengeance; but the sentence has gone forth from the mouth of the great Eternal, *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.* You see then, that you are cursed even on your own principles. For in proportion as you trust to yourselves, your heart departs from the Lord. *But blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope is in the Lord.* Jer. xvii. 5. 7.

Obj. "James declares, that Abraham was justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar, and that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only, Chap. ii. 21. 24.—I answer, Abraham's *being justified by works* cannot relate to the justification of his person before God, for in that sense he was justified long before, even before he was circumcised, Rom. iv. 10. 11. neither can it relate to what some call the *secondary* justification, for this depended, according to their scheme, upon his *finally* persevering in good works, but the works here mentioned, were performed several years before his death. James does not, therefore contradict what Paul said, Rom. iii. 20. *By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God,* and verse, 28. where he declares, *that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.* For

Paul speaks of the justification of our persons before God by faith in Christ's blood: James speaks of justification before men by proving his faith to be sincere, and by acquitting him from the charge of hypocrisy. These two apostles do not speak to the same persons. Paul was confuting the opinion of those false teachers, who wished to join their works with Christ's merits, and supposed, that both these united together were absolutely necessary to constitute a justifying righteousness, and that the merits of the Redeemer were otherwise insufficient for pardon and acceptance with God. Paul therefore declares, that justification in the sight of God is by faith alone, without the least mixture of works. James was confuting the opinion of those, who held, that a historical faith, which he calls a *dead faith*, was sufficient for justification. This shews, that God justifies the *ungodly*, who believe in him by the imputation of Christ's merits, without the least ingredient of works, but he has joined faith and works in the lives of justified persons.

I shall now conclude the subject by making some practical observations on what hath been said.

We have before us one of the grandest transactions ever beheld. The Lord Jesus becoming a *substitute* for unnumbered millions of the human family. And therefore emphatically called the *Lord our righteousness*. From such an important doctrine many benefits must result. And therefore,

The doctrine of justification through the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer is calculated to manifest the vindictive justice of God to the best advantage. It holds up to our view the eternal God maintaining inviolate the dignity of his government even when he pardons the vilest transgressors. Though he pardons sin, yet he will by no means clear the guilty. Every transgression must be atoned through blood. *For without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.* This is verified in the painful and accursed death of the blessed Jesus. When

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he stood chargeable with the sins of the Redeemed, his Father caused the sword of justice to fall on him. *It pleased the Lord, to bruise him. God not only delivered up his Son to punishment, but he delivered him up with complacency, and cried out, Awake, O sword against the Shepherd, against the man that is my fellow.* He poured a dreadful deluge of wrath into his soul. *And who knoweth the power of that wrath, at which the pillars of Heaven tremble.* The infliction of punishment on the innocent Jesus for man's sin, is a more fearful monument of the awful severity of vindictive justice, than all the torments of the damned in hell. The Great God has determined to exercise pardoning mercy, in no other manner, than to declare the inviolable faithfulness of his word, manifest the purity of his nature, and vindicate the demand of inflexible justice.

This scheme of doctrine is best calculated to turn sinners to God. The thoughts of God's awful severity in executing vengeance on his own Son, when sin was only imputed to him, makes our ears to tingle, and our very heart to quake. This very thing is calculated to awaken the secure, and alarm the presumptuous. All the laboured aggravations of guilt, and all the severity of vengeance inflicted on rebellious angels, and on wicked men, are weak and inexpressive, when compared to the *dreadful* import of this grand transaction. For if the Lord God Almighty spared not his own Son, when guilt was only imputed to him, how much less will he spare bold, obstinate, and persevering transgressors. These things are brought forward, that they may hear, fear, and do no more wickedly. Inflexible justice opening a door for the exercise of mercy, manifests the riches of divine grace. And while it strikes the deepest terror on every persevering sinner, it cherishes the brightest hope in every penitent transgressor. What so likely to melt the stony heart, as the transaction of Calvary? To see the innocent Jesus hang on a tree, his side torn with the scourge, his veins streaming with blood, and God Almighty, as his inexorable

merciful Judge, pouring into his breaking heart dreadful sensations of divine wrath; and to think that we, even sinful we, were the objects, for which he suffered, and our sins, the meritorious cause, must produce sympathy for him, and sorrow on account of our sins.

THE doctrine of justification through the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer displays the *free grace* of God to the best advantage. It manifests forgiveness of sins, & acceptance of our persons as righteous before God, through the blood of Jesus. It points to the blood of the Redeemer as the meritorious cause of pardon and acceptance. It manifests the divine favour to be of *pure, free grace*, both with respect to God, who was under no obligation to admit a satisfaction for sin; but might in strict justice, have left the guilty rebels to perish in their transgressions, and of *pure free grace* with respect to the guilty criminals, who are pardoned. For it is bestowed on them freely without any reward, merit, or desert of their own.

THE doctrine of justification through the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ manifests the goodness of God to the best advantage. Wonderful goodness appears in *allowing* a substitute to suffer in the law-room, and *stead* of unnumbered millions who must otherwise have suffered forever and ever. It appears still greater in *providing* a substitute, without any solicitation on our part. But the greatest exertion of goodness appears in *appointing* a Son, an *only begotten Son* to suffer in the stead of his bitter enemies.

THIS scheme of justification displays the wisdom of God to the best advantage. It harmonizes the seemingly opposite claims of justice and mercy. It not only satisfies each, but magnifies both. Justice receives all her demands, and opens a door for the exercise of mercy. Penitent transgressors are restored to divine favour through the sufferings of a substitute.

THE doctrine of justification through the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer, teaches us to place our gospel obedience on the right foundation. Any extreme dan-

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gerous. Some make it the matter, or cause of Justification, others the condition of Christ's righteousness being imputed. Others deny the necessity of gospel obedience, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. But we must distinguish between Christ's obedience and our own. His is meritorious, ours the duty only, of a rational dependant creature. Christ's is performed for us, in our stead, and imputed to us; but ours is performed to God from a principle of love and gratitude. By means of Christ's righteousness imputed to us, we are accepted and esteemed righteous before God, and are as truly so as Adam was or could have been by a complete righteousness of his own performance, Rom. v. 19. For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Gospel obedience is a tribute of gratitude, which we owe to God, and is an evidence of being in a justified state, *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in.* This scheme of justification teaches us, that after performing a strict course of gospel obedience, we are to count ourselves only unprofitable servants. Our obedience does not make God a debtor to us, but his giving us the justifying merits of his Son, makes us unspeakable and everlasting debtors to him. And now reader, may the God of grace enlighten your understanding, that you may say with the Apostle, Gal. ii. 16. *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.* Heb. viii. 10. 12. *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I WILL put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and WILL be to them a God, and they SHALL be to me a people.—For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more.* And therefore, Rom. viii. 33. 34. *Who shall*

shall lay any thing to the charge of God's **ELECT**? It is
 God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ
 that died, for our sins; yea rather, that is risen again, for
 our justification, who is even at the right hand of God;
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 ever and ever. **AMEN**



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